

STAMFORD (Conn.)
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Circ.: e. 22,414

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JUN 3 1955

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Soviet Education

It is difficult to determine the condition of anything behind the Iron Curtain. Official Soviet reports mean nothing taken literally. They must be analyzed and interpreted by specialists who know and understand the workings of the Soviet mind, and the conditions existing in Russia.

When Russian educational statistics, recently released, seemed to show that the Soviet was graduating more university trained scientists than America, some timid souls immediately feared that this meant that the free world was losing scientific pre-eminence. Others seized on this announcement as another reason for federal government invasion into the field of education.

Allen W. Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, has put those fears to rest. Mr. Dulles told a Columbia audience that although the Soviet is graduating as many scientists, the quality is far short of American standards. He draws this conclusion from the fact that America develops twice as many research workers as the Soviet. But even in quantity America has little to fear. America produces thousands of fully qualified engineers every year who have learned their profession by home study and practical experience. For this group, and for the vast American reservoir of persons with high grade mechanical skills, the Soviet has no counterpart.

Mr. Dulles, on the contrary, sees Soviet education as a threat to Communism rather than to the free world. He believes that the "perplexed and probably unharmonious group in the Kremlin are faced with a tremendous problem. It has been forced to make compromises. Heretofore, after a period of compromise there has been a period of purge and a return to the rigid Stalin line. But the greater the education of the Soviet people, the harder it will be to shut them off from the outside world and reality.

It is possible, according to Mr. Dulles, that the Kremlin group may try such tactics again. With mass education approaching the seventh grade level, however, Mr. Dulles believes that any further raising of educational standards might seriously weaken Soviet ideological control over the people.

It is impossible to disagree with Mr. Dulles. No one with a good eighth grade education could possibly believe in the Marxian-Lenin-Stalin economic and political system.